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PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD ASIA - AFRICA FORUM ON COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATING DROUGHT

Ulan Bator, Mongolia, 21-25 June 2001

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Third Asia - Africa Forum on Combating Desertification and Mitigating the Effects of Drought was held in Ulan Bator, Mongolia from 21 - 25 June 2001. It represented the continuation of efforts to exchange experiences and initiate cooperation on the basis of the analysis of lessons learnt under the UNCCD Regional Implementation Annexes in Asia and Africa. It was observed that these were the two continents with the largest population and areas affected by desertification and drought. 80 participants attended the Forum including 40 from Asia, 20 from Africa and 10 from the countries in other regions and international organizations. The participation of representatives of developed country Parties such as Canada, Germany, Japan and Netherlands was also appreciated. The Third Forum was hosted by the Government of Mongolia and co-sponsored by the Government of Japan and the Government of Germany and the participants expressed their gratitude to them.

II. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE ASIA-AFRICA FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

A. Background

The First Asia Africa Forum on Combating Desertification adopted a Framework for Action in August 1994. In the Beijing Framework for Action on Asia-Africa Co-operation, Parties from the two continents identified the scope and objectives for mobilizing South-South co-operation with other interested Parties. It further spelled out nine guiding principles and the elements for the framework of actions. Implementation modalities were also reviewed. These included twinning arrangements at the national, sub regional and regional levels and a call for "triangular" co-operation whereby activities initiated by two or more countries receive financial support from a third party in a spirit of partnership. The elements of the framework led to the recommendations made at the Second Asia-Africa Forum. Those included interventions in the following fields:

I. Early warning systems
II. Research and Development
III. Traditional practices and know how
IV. Water resources management
V. Soil use and conservation
VI. Afforestation and reforestation
VII. Development of alternative source of energy
VIII. Capacity reinforcement, including training and education
IX. Promotion of local, grassroots development and the eradication of poverty

It was noted that progress was registered in such areas as:

- The development of operative structures for the respective Regional Action Programmes through the gradual establishment of Thematic Programme Networks;

- Activities related to early warning system in the context of the work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology;

- The establishment of a roster of experts and the inventory of institutions.

B. Assessment

Presentations and comments proposed a sobering assessment of the road travelled thus far. A number of factors were identified to explain delays in follow-up action on the proposals made at the Forum. One of the main difficulties in maintaining the desirable momentum relates to the slower than expected rate of implementing of the UNCCD. National focal points face a range of methodological difficulties in formulating or mainstreaming the NAP and in concluding partnership arrangements.

As a national level action is the cornerstone of the CCD implementation, delays at this level impact negatively on progress at all levels. At sub-regional level, the transition from the planning stage to the operational phase of agreed programmes is fraught with uncertainties. At regional level, Thematic Programme Networks have difficulties in assessing the critical level of minimum resources to sustain enabling activities.

Generally speaking, the lack of funding has inhibited the development of an Asia-Africa South-South Co-operation Framework. It is hoped that access to enabling funding will be improved, notably in the light of developments in the GEF to include Land Degradation and desertification as a focal area. The review of the implementation process and a common assessment of challenges and possible responses may also facilitate a consensus approach and a broader support for an Asia-Africa co-operation framework.

In the meantime, as a coping strategy, it is proposed to focus on a few specific activities, until such time the Conference of the Parties can give a new impulse to partnership building between Parties. Thus participants advocated a realistic approach. In the given circumstances, steps forward in South-South co-operation must be incremental. While the pertinence of the Framework for Action was reiterated, participants recognise the need to focus now on a few starts up Asia-Africa initiatives with a high degree of feasibility. Aspects of the exchanges of participants are highlighted below. The Asia-Africa consultative process shall be pursued in due time to review progress made.

III. PROCEEDINGS

During the opening ceremony, H.E. Mr. N. Enkhbayar, Prime Minister, highlighted the Government's efforts to find an optimal balance between increasing demands for grazing lands to raise livestock for the people's food and income source and pressing needs for combatting desertification and nurturing ecosystems. In this context, he expressed his wish that the Third Asia - Africa Forum shall contribute to mobilizing public support to the activities to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. The Forum should propose concrete measures for enabling both Asia and Africa to address their common concerns and to promote inter-regional collaboration.

Mr. Gregoire de Kalbermatten, Principal Coordinator for Policy and Programme Coordination speaking on behalf of Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary, UNCCD stressed the significance of convening the Third Forum in Mongolia. The country cherishes its cultural heritage of traditional herding practices, faces the magnitude of desertification and has expressed political commitment to implement the CCD. He expressed his wish that the Forum shall produce fruitful outcomes and

practical proposals for promoting concrete activities to promote inter-regional collaboration in the areas of combating desertification.

H.E. Mr. Klaus Schröder, Ambassador of Germany to Mongolia delineated the challenges the world faces in trying to co-exist in harmony with the limited nature and space on our planet. He stated that supporting the activities to combat desertification is a central theme for the German government's policies for promoting international cooperation and expressed his hope that the Forum shall articulate concrete future actions for supporting such endeavors.

Mr. Minoru Kikuchi, Counsellor, Embassy of Japan stressed the importance that the Government of Japan attaches to the activities to combat desertification and its support to the CCD implementation. He emphasized the hope of the Japanese government that the Forum will promote positive outcomes to facilitate the CCD implementation through meaningful inter-regional collaboration between Asia and Africa.

The participants elected H.E. Mr. Ulambayar Saruulbuyan, Minister of Nature and Environment, Mongolia as Chairman, Mr. Magedi Sinada, Ambassador, Chairman of the African Group of the UNCCD and Permanent Observer, Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya as Vice Chairman and Mr. A. Andriantsilavo, Chief, Foreign Trade Department, Toamasina, Secretary of Madagascar as Rapporteur.

Following the introduction of the overall objectives for the Inter-Forum by the UNCCD Secretariat, Ambassador Sinada of Sudan presented the Arid / African Initiative Action and the key recommendations that emerged from the Second Forum held in Niamey, Niger in September, 1997. He pointed out the key areas of interregional collaboration. Some of the areas include, but not limited to, mobilizing political support to facilitate the implementation of Rural and participatory development, land tenure, training, and human resource development and joint preparation of studies of experts and an exchange of experiences for supporting Asia / African collaboration in the areas of combating desertification.

The summary of presentations and exchanges throughout the week-end session is contained for your reference in an annex to this Chairman's summary, which was adopted at the plenary session.

During the closing ceremony H.E Ulambayar Saruulbuyan, Minister for Nature and Environment, Mongolia and Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD made concluding speeches highlighting the outcomes of the Forum and the key elements of the future following Actions. Vote of thanks were made by H.E. Mr. Christian Schwarzenholz, Minister, State Committee for Land Management, Agriculture and Nature, Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Kuvat Orozbekov, Environmental Protection Authority, Kyrgyz Republic on behalf of the participants.

IV. PROPOSALS FOR START UP INITIATIVES

A. Preamble

The validity of the Beijing Framework for Action on Asia-Africa Co-operation on Combatting Desertification and/or Mitigating the Effects of Drought and of the elements of intervention contained in the Niamey conclusions was reiterated. It is in this context that the participants advised to take up a number of starts up

activities to operationalize the agreed principles and objectives of UNCCD Asia-Africa cooperation.

In the meantime, developed country Parties, regional and sub-regional organizations, the Global Mechanism, the Secretariat of the CCD and othere relevant organizations are invited to support South- South Asia-Africa cooperation as defined by the above mentioned Framework within the context of the CCD implementation. More specifically, the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism are invited to facilitate the launching of the remaining planned Thematic Programme Networks which represent a cost-effective mechanism for sharing of data and experience within and between the respective regions. In this respect a proposal was made for an umbrella project that would channel the required support to all the TPNs.

B List of proposed start-up activities

1. *Facilitation of Interregional Africa Asia Information Exchange*

The National and subregional focal points and task managers of TPNs of Asia and Africa should provide the CCD Regional Co-ordination Units (RCUs) in Bangkok and Abidjan with information on: a. supply of services that can be offered for Asia-Africa co-operation in such areas as: technology transfer, education and training, traditional knowledge and best practices. They would express their demand on in areas where they seek exchanges or assistance. The RCUs could gradually build a service-oriented database and animate Asia-Africa information exchanges. The Secretariat should provide support to build up this activity and establish a link with its web site. Regional and sub-regional organisations can assist this process.

2. *Networking Amongst TPN Task Managers*

Direct relationships and interactions between the respective TPNs of Africa and Asia dealing with the same area should be strengthened through e-mail exchange of information on pertinent matters, including relevant and adaptable technologies, best practices, traditional knowledge, lessons learnt and experience in promoting synergies between the Rio Conventions. The task managers shall, as appropriate, disseminate information within the members of their respective TPNs.

3. *Capacity Building/Strengthening*

Capacity building at various levels and for the different priority areas is a key prerequisite for enhancing and strengthening the inter-regional cooperation and partnership as well as for the implementation of the UNCCD. However, given the fact that it is a long-term process and also it requires sustainable adequate resources, there is a need to proceed step by step and to mobilise and further develop existing initiatives in the two regions. The Secretariat, with interested Parties and organizations, such as ICARDA and ACSAD will help to develop a common methodological framework to conduct the needs assessment. Based on this framework, a country driven capacity building/strengthening needs assessment should be undertaken by the national focal points in collaboration with the regional TPNs. Lessons should be learnt from and synergies should be pursued with the Capacity development initiative currently undertaken by the GEF. The results and analysis of the needs assessment will be the basis for the development of a capacity building program. Further efforts should be made to build in capacity building components

into field activities involving local stake holders by promoting a participatory approach.

4. *The Asia Africa Research, Development and Training Center*

In reference to the decision taken by the Second Asia-Africa Forum in Niamey in 1997 concerning the establishment of the above Center, the Chinese Government undertook the required efforts for the preparation and establishment of the Center. The Center is almost ready for launching. The Secretariat should assist in finding ways and means of support to establish the Asia-Africa Research, Development and Training Center in Beijing.

5. *Partnership Building*

The Co-ordination Meeting for Partnership Building and resources Mobilisation for the UNCCD Implementation in China reached the conclusion of establishing a contact group to facilitate concrete support to the NAP in China with assistance of the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism. While commending the efforts made by China and its partners and expressing the hope for substantive progress in partnership as a result of this initiative, the Forum calls for suitable similar consultative arrangements leading to partnership agreements in conformity with the provisions of the Convention, in affected country Parties having completed their NAP, particularly in Africa and Asia. It is necessary for the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, interested country Parties and institutions to be called upon to facilitate this process.

6. *Monitoring and Assessment of Desertification*

A expert workshop covering interested UNCCD Implementation Annexes and involving also representatives of relevant institutions from developed country Parties, as well as international, regional and sub-regional organisations should provide some guidance as how to standardise methodologies and how to contribute to a harmonisation of tools and procedures for monitoring and assessment of desertification. Resources to this effect must be mobilised and available resources better used. The transfer of appropriate technologies should be taken into account. This proposal should be considered in the light of ongoing CST initiatives and the similar work undertaken at various levels.

7. *Decision Support Systems for Enhancing Preparedness to Drought*

Existing mechanisms dealing with linkages, interactions and exchange of information on early warning systems (EWS) can foster Asia - Africa co-operation. ICARDA's research on drought mitigation and the planned network on drought mitigation to be established by ICARDA and FAO with EU support, should provide capacity building and technical assistance to UNCCD activities. Linkages are encouraged, particularly with the relevant TPNs of the two regions, the Sub Regional Action Programmes for Western and Central Asia in co-operation with ACSAD and AOAD.

8. Integrating Early Warning Systems

Inter regional cooperation should promote more comprehensive early warning systems. On one hand EWS for droughts should be coupled with EWS for El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) to better predict the onset and duration of drought. On the other hand, they should more consistently integrate socio economic data to assess drought impact and desertification trends. Such EWS should also be further integrated into the NAPs, as available, as the foundation for national drought mitigation policies and plans. It is suggested that the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the CCD/COP can lead the way towards better performing systems by carrying out a global review and regional comparative studies on EWSs.

9. Implementing the Joint Programme Between the UNCCD and the CBD

Assessment and selected targeted action under the above joint programme can also be implemented through the TPN mechanisms in Africa and Asia. These networks are advised to share information on suitable practices and approaches. The secretariat of the UNCCD and the secretariat of the CBD are invited to support the TPNs in this respect and facilitate linkages of their work with the Committee on Science and Technology.

10. Synergistic Programming

The Forum took note of the positive results of the National Forum on Combatting Desertification and Promoting the Synergistic Implementation of Inter Linked Multilateral Environmental Conventions that took place in Ulan Bator in June 2001. It endorses the joint development of synergistic programmes at field level to discharge obligations of Parties under the UNCCD, CBD, UNFCCC and calls for further support of the international community for the co-ordination of this effort and the implementation of synergistic programmes in the framework of the UNCCD NAP process.

11. Rehabilitation of Degraded Rangelands in Western Asian and North African States

Given the cultural and ecological similarities between the Western Asian and North African areas, it is proposed to formulate with interested partner institutions, a Comparative Pilot Programme in selected areas of concerned countries. This is to test and disseminate participatory methodologies which reflect best practices for the rehabilitation of rangeland, to promote the efficiency of water use and land use practices, and to seek win-win options for poverty eradication and environmental protection through integrated eco system management. Results would be mainstreamed through the relevant TPNs of Asia and Africa and also ACSAD and ICARDA TNs in the context of the western Asian SRAP and UMA (Union du Maghreb Arabe).

12. Exchanges on National Reconstruction Youth Corps

In the demographic and economic context of Asia and Africa, programmes providing employment and income generating opportunities to lower income youth, while raising environmental awareness and combating desertification, deserve highest priority. The Secretariat of UNCCD, together with interested bilateral and

multilateral partners, is invited to assist in supporting and funding the dissemination of positive experiences such as those gathered in Lesotho and India and in raising awareness and replicating such programmes on an inter-regional basis.

13. Commemoration of World Day to Combat Desertification

June 17 is the World Day to Combat Desertification. The Third Asia-Africa Forum invites the forthcoming COP 5 to request the Secretariat to specify every year a specific theme, of a global, regional and/or strategic nature, for the World Day, in order to strengthen the cohesion and rallying power of the UNCCD and to mobilise a global coalition to combat desertification.

14. Roster of Experts and Inventories of Institutions on Interregional Collaboration in the Areas of Combatting Desertification

The Forum invites the Office of Special Co-ordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries of the Department of Economic and social Affairs (DESA) in New York to:

a) Complete the provisional version of the roster and inventory by updating detailed information on experts and institutions wherever required in contact with interested Parties and institutions.

b) Facilitating access and contacts with institutions and experts listed in the roster of experts and inventory of institutions

c) Explore measures for integrating them into, and or making them compatible with the CCD/CST roster and inventory

d) Seek ways for making the roster and inventory more user-friendly

e) Link the web sites of both OSCAL and CCD and carry information on the proposed roster and inventory for wide public use.

15. Priority to NAP Formulation

In conclusion, an important principle of the UNCCD must be reiterated. While international, regional and subregional cooperation is highly encouraged, affected Parties who have not yet done so, are urged to finalise their individual NAPs at their earliest possible convenience. Regional and subregional institutions in both regions should focus on providing the necessary support to NAP preparation and implementation whenever required.

Annex I

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION AND EXCHANGES DURING THE WORKING SESSIONS OF THE MEETING

1. Session One

NAP Implementation and Partnership Development

To initiate discussion on the NAP implementation processes, representatives of Uganda and Turkmenistan made presentations on the NAP implementation in their respective countries.

In Uganda, a national steering committee and district steering committees were established to promote the CCD implementation through a bottom-up and community-driven approach. The National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Uganda was drafted so as to identify linkages with existing policy instruments such as the National Environment Management Policy (1997) and the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (1997) and adopted in June 1997. In the NAP formulation and implementation process, Uganda has successfully initiated partnership with donor countries and agencies. Key challenges that remain ahead in promoting the NAP implementation include: to link counter-measures against desertification with socio-economic policies such as poverty eradication, to fill technical and financial gaps, to strengthen capacities and to raise awareness.

In Turkmenistan, the NAP was adopted in 1996 with the support of UNEP. Since 1997, GTZ extends to Turkmenistan not only technical and financial assistance, but also offer training courses as part of capacity building programmes for Turkmenistan experts. In parallel with the CCD/NAP implementation process, the implementation of the Sub-regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (SRAP) in Central Asia also weights significantly in the Turkmenistan's efforts to implement the NAP. Land degradation control in the Aral Sea Basin through the SRAP should support both intergovernmental cooperation and activities at the national level.

Mali and China both presented the NAP implementation and partnership development, in particular round table meetings for supporting the CCD/NAP implementation. Mali adopted the NAP in 1999 and organized the round table meeting in the same year. In case of Mali, Germany acts as a chef de file a lead donor country. In China, the NAP was adopted in 1997 and desertification control activities were integrated into important part of the China's national policy for promoting sustainable development in the western part of China for the next 10 years. The recent coordination meeting initiated a country driven dialogue for partnership building.

Some participants observed that a number of elements raised in the four presentations address common factors that are crucial in successfully carrying out the CCD/NAP implementation process. Mainstreaming the NAP into the overall national policy, a bottom-up and participatory approach, capacity building and partnership arrangements are some of those generic elements. It was also noted that due to some of the political, economic and topographical characteristics, countries rely on different entry points for advancing the NAP process. While it is important to follow basic principles of the NAP process, innovative approaches need to be employed to meet peculiar conditions of respective countries.

2. Session Two

"Combatting Desertification and Promoting Synergistic Implementation of Sustainable Development Policies and Inter-linked Environmental Conventions"

A presentation was made on the result of the National Forum on Combatting Desertification and Promoting Synergistic Implementation of Inter-linked Multilateral Conventions held in Mongolia that preceded the Third Forum. It demonstrated potential benefits of promoting synergies in various environmental convention implementations and highlighted key elements for pursuing such synergies. Linkages between combatting desertification, conserving biodiversity and mitigating adverse effects of climate change are evident at the both policy implementation as well as field level activities. Limited technical and institutional capacities and financial constraints are some of the obstacles for pursuing activities to promote synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental conventions.

A community based multi-faced project in Lesotho (Environment Youth Corp) was presented that demonstrated the effective achievement of multiple objectives through involving youth in the country. The umbrella project covers 68 projects sites in 10 district involving 1450 youth during the period of 1996 -1999. The projects include multiple activities such as establishment of nurseries, reforestation, donga rehabilitation, road construction, recyclable waste collection, income-generating activities, financial management and group leader training.

The people-centered approach has been working effectively, bringing benefits for the people, motivating the population while trying to alleviate the consequence of increasing demands for water and natural resources.

A Mongolian NGO recalled that preventing desertification is a more economically feasible option than rehabilitating deserted lands. Arable land space in Mongolia decreased by one fourth over the last decade and crop yielding also decreased by 40 %. Even though land space is abundant in Mongolia, arable land space is limited and irrigated lands are further restricted. Efforts are made to control a fallow (suspension of agriculture activities) rotation system and promoting vegetation of species such as poplar that is resistant to drought, caragana suitable for protection of arable and alfalfa and grassland used as fodder.

Another Mongolian NGO presented a project of community driven activities to combat desertification that aims at enhancing the participation of women and youth in the activities to prevent land degradation and improving ecosystems to preserve biodiversity. The local people promote growing tree seedlings, tree plantation, tree nurturing, improving water supply, installation of new pumps and rehabilitation of abandoned irrigation schemes, production of briquette fuel from coal powders and awareness raising.

Some participants observed that while the multilateral environmental conventions and relevant national policy instruments provide measures for achieving environmental benefits, the level of benefits that can be attributed to the local people often determines whether field activities shall achieve the intended objectives. Linking environmental objectives with the need of the local community

and population is an essential element that needs to be taken into account to carry out effective field activities to combat desertification.

3. Session Three

"Early Warning Systems - Their Role in Combating Desertification and Future Challenges"

The ESCAP regional adviser made a presentation on early warning systems (EWSs) to recapture key elements of the EWSs and trigger discussions to explore further collaboration on EWSs between Asia and Africa. IPCC reported that climate change induces rainfall shifts at various latitudes that causes drought and reduce the level of soil moisture. El Niño Suthern Oscillation (ENSO) causes drought in the Pacific Rim while causing floods in Latin America. Meteorological monitoring that is essential for drought early warning systems is often conducted together with vegetation monitoring. Collected data must be provided in a user - friendly manner with proper analysis on data while trying to enhance its accuracy. A wider scope of data collection even at the regional or global levels is also suggested to enhance the operation of EWSs.

It is suggested that the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the CCD/COP can carry out a global review and regional comparative studies on EWSs. In case of Asia, in the light that EWSs are geared to promote land use monitoring including desertification, it was pointed out that there would be a great deal of merits in pursuing linkages between EWSs and TPN1 activities. The proposed Asian thematic regional network on capacity building for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought (TPN5) will also offer a framework useful to promote linkages between EWSs, drought forecasting and desertification monitoring.

Some participants commented that soil moisture loss can be also defined as soil profile drought. Rainfall in non-farming seasons can be deducted from the overall precipitation and such a concept can create another definition of drought called temporal drought. Defining drought is in other words a matter of parameter setting. In Mongolia, the economic damage caused by drought in combination with subsequent severe winter in 1999 - 2000 is estimated to be US$ 95 million. Effective use of EWSs that could reduce the damage even by 10% could still generate a substantive saving. Linking North Africa and West Asia in the EWS network can offer a framework to tackle drought at the interregional level.

4. Session Four

"Promoting Inter-regional Collaboration Through Regional Thematic Networks"

Both African and Asian TPN task managers on water resource management made presentations. The CCD network on Integrated Management of International River, Lake and Hydrological Basins to Combat Desertification in Africa was launched in December 2000 in Accra, Ghana. The SADC Water Sector coordination Unit was designated as an institutional focal point for the network. The network members identified

programme areas such as: assessment of water resources and strengthening information systems, capacity building and improving legislative frameworks.

TPN4, an Asian regional thematic programme network on water resources management for agriculture in arid, semi arid and dry sub-humid areas, currently being developed in Syria for proposed launching later this year, aims at strengthening information network, linking national/subregional/regional activities, promoting capacity-building, training and developing strategies for sustainable water resource management.

The participants observed the network should be utilized to mobilize expertise on water resources management in both continents. Mobilizing support from the network members and partners remains high priority. The network should be developed to provide network members and the public with substantive benefits. Technology aspects are crosscutting issues that need to be addressed. Promoting collaboration between Asian and African networks, in particular through the network information systems were suggested as useful.

The African regional thematic programme network on agroforestry and soil conservation launched in June 2001 in Lome, Togo was presented by INSAH-CILSS, its task manager. It aims at among others, facilitating information transfer and application, strengthening collaboration among network members, and facilitating adaptation and transfer of technology, research and training.

The Asian regional thematic programme network on agroforestry and soil conservation (TPN2) hosted in Jodhpur, India, intends to conduct a regional study on agroforestry practices and techniques, develop information network, build capacities and undertake field pilot programmes.

In the discussion, it emerged that information exchange in particular on successful practices would be useful. The network should be developed building upon the past activities in the concerned areas including traditional knowledge. It was mentioned that creating synergies with other environmental conventions, developing benchmarks and indicators, involving key regional and international partner agencies such as ICRAF would be important. It was also suggested to develop an umbrella project proposal to support all of the TPNs.

The Asian regional thematic programme network on desertification monitoring and assessment hosted in Beijing, China, was also presented. It intends to develop a regional map of desertification in Asia, promote collaboration on research and capacity building. Participants, while emphasizing the importance of desertification monitoring and assessment, underlined that harmonizing indicators and methods, as well as building upon ongoing activities, is essential for the successful operation of monitoring and assessment.

9. Session Five

Capacity Building and Human Resource Development - Needs and Feasibility for Undertaking Inter-regional Training Programmes for Combating Desertification in Asia and Africa

A representative of the Chinese Government presented an update on the recent development regarding a proposal to establish the Asia - Africa Research and Training Center for Combating Desertification on which the interactions were reflected in the main text of this Chairman's Summary. The representative of the Chinese Government presented an update on the development of this proposal at this Third Forum. The Government has carried out further preparatory work to materialize the proposal, including the designation of the potential host institute. The Chinese government hopes that partners shall provide support to facilitate the process for establishing the proposed Center.

A representative of ICARDA presented its human capacity building programme, of which the main focus is to increase the capacity of national agricultural research systems to conduct research and technology transfers for improving sustainable productivity of natural resources and protecting the environment in dry lands, in particular in West and Central Asia and North Africa. Training programmes relevant to combating desertification includes on-farm water management addressing water harvesting, watershed management, water use efficiency, the use of non-conventional water resources. The programmes also include rangeland management, soil conservation and land management, biodiversity conservation and germplasm improvement as well as tools for facilitating and gereralization of results such as agroecological characterization, GIS, remoste sensing, expert systems and conferences. The ICARDA representative presented an example of training on water harvesting that addressed indigenous knowledge and systems, macro/micro water catchment suitable for various conditions, and development of implementation tools on runoff stripes, runoff basins, water spreading techniques for water harvesting with low cost. It was stated that though the share has been increasing recently, the participation of female trainees in the programmes must be further promoted

The representative of ENDA presented its activities that address land management, agroforestry, promotion of vegetation and reforestation, community empowerment, nursery development, awareness raising and information dissemination. It was suggested to carefully examine different capacity building needs for policy, research and operational activities, and to properly assess capacity building needs in each community and country.

In discussions, mention was made that objectives and targeted groups must be properly defined to design and undertake effective capacity buildings. Options for synergistic implementation of capacity building at the national, sub-regional and regional levels must be maximized. Emphasis was given to the importance of capacity building at the national level, and integrating capacity building into the programmes to support the local communities. It was also suggested to learn lessons from ongoing capacity building assessment exercises such as the Capacity Development Initiatives undertaken by the GEF in the areas of climate change, biodiversity and land degradation. Regional thematic programme networks offer frameworks to promote human and institutional capacity building.

6. Session Six

"Roster of Experts and Inventories of Institutions for Asia - Africa Interregional Collaboration"

The representative of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and LDCs (OSCAL) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs briefed the participants on developments concerning the follow-up to recommendation of the Second Asia - Africa Forum held in 1997. Over the past few years after the Second Forum, the OSCAL developed a provisional version of a roster and inventory of institutions for Asia - Africa inter-regional collaboration in the areas of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Concrete suggestions were mentioned to complete and improve the provisional roster and inventory, to explore measures for integrating in or making compatible with the CCD/CST roster and inventory, and to link the websites of CCD and OSCAL. This would make relevant information on this matter available for a wide range of stakeholders.

In discussions, it was suggested to make Asia - Africa roster and inventory integrated into the work by the CCD/CST roster and inventory. It was indicated to look into the merits of installing a screening process for including experts in the roster and expert to make them more credible and selective.

At the end of the Session 6, a representative, speaking on behalf of the developed countries present at Forum made remarks that in preparing for the final conclusion of the Forum, consideration should be given to the following specific aspects: (i) this Forum could achieve its objectives better by focusing on issues of specific interests to Asia and Africa to promote South-South cooperation, (ii) TPNs could seek to develop common and more manageable methodologies and technologies, and (iii) the CCD website should be more widely utilized for promoting information sharing. It is also important to prioritize the variety of suggested activities and to integrate them into overall national development plans as developed countries need to be selective in providing support to such activities.

Annex II

Agenda

Day 1 (Thursday 21)

8:30 - 9:00 Registration

9:00 - 9:20 Opening Session

H.E. Mr. N. Enkhbayar, Prime Minister, Mongolia

Mr. Grégoire de Kalbematten, Principal Coordinator for Policy and Programme Development on behalf of Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

H.E. Mr Klaus Schröder, Ambassador of Germany to Mongolia

Mr. Minoru Kikuchi, Counselor, Embassy of Japan

9:20 - 9:35 Break

9:35 - 9:50 Election of the Bureau

Introductory Session

Presentation on the outcomes of the Second Forum by Mr. Rogatien Biaou, Secrétaire Général, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de la Coopération, Benin

9:50 - 12:30 Session 1 "Overview of the CCD Implementation in Africa and Asia and Progress Made in Promoting Asia - Africa Inter-Regional Collaborations"

Overview by the CCD Secretariat

"Uganda's NAP Implementation and Partnership Arrangements" by Mr. Stephen Muwaya, Senior Range Ecologist, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda.

"NAP and Partnership Arrangements" by Mr. Durikov Muhamet, Head, Laboratory of Forests and Rangeland, National Institute of Deserts, Flora & Fauna, Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan.

"Coordination Meeting for Partnership Building and Resources Mobilization for UNCCD Implementation" by Mr. Liu Tuo, Director General, National Bureau to Combat Desertification of the China Committee on Implementing the CCD, State Forestry Administration.

"Mali's Round Table Meeting for UNCCD Implementation", by Mr. Salif Kanouté, Secrétaire Permanent PNAE/CID, Ministre de l'Equipement de L'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Environnement de L'Urbanisme, Mali.

Discussions

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:45 Session 2 "Combating Desertification and Promoting Synergistic Implementation of Sustainable Development Policies and Inter-Linked Environmental Conventions"

Overview by the CCD Secretariat

"Outcome of the National Forum on Combating Desertification and Promoting Synergistic Implementation of Inter-Linked Multilateral Environmental Conventions" by Dr. N. Sarantuya, Director of the Department for Strategic Planning and Management, Ministry of Nature and Environment, Mongolia.

"Case Study on a Country Driven Project on Integrated Environment Action in Dry Areas", Mrs. Jane Malephane, Director, National Environment Secretariat, Ministry of Environment, Gender and Youth, Lesotho.

"Soil Fertility Changes of Agricultural Land in Mongolia", by Dr. Sh Purevsuren, President of the Soil Fertility Association, Monoglia

"Community Participation in Combating Desertification", by Dr. N. Namukai, Centre for Development and Environment.

15:45 - 16:00 Break

16:00 - 17:00 Session 3 "Early Warning Systems - Their Role in Combating Desertification and Future Challenges"

Overview by the CCD Secretariat

"Early Warning Systems - Recent Development" by Pak Sum Low, Advisor, United Nations Economic Council for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Discussions

17:00 Adjournment

18:30 Reception hosted by H.E. Mr. Ulambayar Barsbold, Minister for Nature and Environment and Dr. Z. Batjargal, General-Director, National Agency for Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment Monitoring, Mongolia and President of CCD/COP 4, Chinngis Khaan Hotel, Ulan Bator.

Day 2 (Friday 22)

9:00 - 10:30 Session 4 "Promoting Inter-Regional Collaboration Through Regional Thematic Programme Networks"

Overview by the CCD Secretariat

"Asian Regional Thematic Programme Network on Agroforestry and Soil Conservation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry Sub-humid Areas" by Mr. R. K. Singh, Senior Scientist, Central Soil & Water Conservation, Research and Training Institute Research Centre, India

"African Regional Thematic Programme Network on Agroforestry and Soil Conservation" by Mr. Gaoussou Traoré, INSAH-CILSS, Mali

"African Regional Thematic Programme Network on Integrated Water Management" by Thabo Mefi, SADC-WSCU, Lesotho

"Proposed Asian Regional Thematic Programme Network on Water Resource Management for Dry Land Agriculture" by Mr. Jamal Jamaleddin, TPN 4 National Coordinator, Ministry of Irrigation, Syria.

"Asian Regional Thematic Programme Network on Desertification Monitoring and Assessment (TPN 1)' by Ms. Yan Liu, TPN 1 Focal Point, Institute of Forest Resource Information Technologies, Chinese Academy of Forestry.

Discussions

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45 - 12:30 Continuation of Session 4 "Promoting Inter-Regional Collaboration Through Regional Thematic Programme Networks"

Discussions

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 16:00	Session 5 "Capacity Building and Human Resource Development - Needs and Feasibility for Undertaking Inter-Regional Training Programmes for Combating Desertification in Asia and Africa"
	Overview by the Secretariat
	"Asia - Africa Training Centre for Combatind Desertification Updates" by Mr. Liu Tuo, Director General, National Bureau to Combat Desertification of the China Committee on Implementing the CCD, State Forestry Administration.
	"Capacity Building Programmes for Combatind Desertification" by Dr. Theib Oweis, Senior Water Management Expert, International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).
	"Capacity Building Programmes for Combating Desertification in Africa" by Mr. Youba Sokona, Executive Secretary, Head of International Division, ENDA TM Programme Energie.
	Discussions
16:00 - 16:15	Break
16:15 - 16:45	Session 6 "Roster of Experts and Inventories of Institutions on Inter-regional Collaboration in the Areas of Combating Desertification"
	Overview by the CCD Secretariat
	Presentation to be confirmed.
	Discussions
16:45 - 17:00	Break
17:00 - 18:00	Open-ended Drafting Session.

Day 3 (Saturday 23)

9:00 - 11:30	Session 7 "Drafting of the Chairman's Summary"
11:30 - 12:00	Break and lunch

12:00 - 12:30	Concluding Session
	Adoption of the Chairman's Summary
	Closing Remarks by H. E. Mr. Ulambayar Barsbold, Minister for Nature and Environment, Mongolia
	Closing Remarks by Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.
	Vote of thanks
	Adjournment
20:00	Departure from the Hotel to the Field Visit.

Day 4 (Sunday 24)

Field Visit

Day 5 (Monday 25)

8:00	Return from the field visit

Annex III[1]

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

AFRICA

Angola
Mr. João Da Costa Vintém
National Focal Point
International Exchange Cabinet
Ministry of Fisheries and Environment

Burundi
Mr. Etienne Kayengeyenge
Ministère de l'Aménagement du
Territoire et de l'Environnement
Cabinet du Ministre

Chad
Mr. Korbayom Jedien Banda
Bureau de Coordination de la Convention
sur la Lutte contre la Désertification
Direction des Forêts et de la
Protection de l'Environnement
Ministère de l'Environnement et de
l'Eau

Egypt
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Ethiopia
Mr. Getachew Eschete
National UNCCD Focal Point
Environmental Protection Authority

Lesotho
Mrs. Jane Malephane
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National Environment Secretariat
Ministry of Environment, Gender and
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Mali
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Ministère de l'Equipement, de
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Cabinet du Premier Ministre
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1 Annex in English and French only as submitted.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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The General Corporation for
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National Agency for Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment Monitoring

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International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Nature and Environment

Mrs. N. Sarantuya
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Strategic Planning and Management Department
Ministry for Nature and Environment

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Dry Zone Greening Dept
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Mr. Mukti Narayan Shrestha
Secretary
Ministry of Population and Environment

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Ministry of Forestry and Environment

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Ministry of Irrigation

Syrian Arab Republic
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Mr. Thabo Meti

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